

CATHOLIC DIOCESE OF HAMILTON



*He Pūrongo Arotake Mātauranga
Ahurea Katorika ā Waho.*

*Catholic Special Character
External Evaluation Report*

Bishop Edward Gaines Catholic School Tokoroa

Evaluation conducted on 31 May 2023

Confirmed Report 04 July 2023

School Details 2023

Name of School: Bishop Edward Gaines Catholic School

Address: Mossop Rd, Tokoroa, South Waikato
P O Box 167, Tokoroa, 3444

School type State Integrated co-educational (Years 1-8)

Actual roll: 44

Maximum roll: 120

Non-preference maximum: 6

Actual non-preference number: 7

5.1: 33 (76%) **5.2:** 0 **5.3:** 3 (7%) **5.4:** 2 (5%) **5.5:** 5 (12%)

Roll based staffing entitlement: 5.9

Required number of Special Character CI 47 positions: 1

Filled number of Special Character CI 47 positions: 0

Principal/Director of Religious Studies: Bernadette Hall

Board of Trustees President: Sean McChlery (C)

Elected Members (C NC)

1. James Coxhead C
2. Corbon Loughnan
3. James Farrell
4. Conor Croke C
5. Sarah Flavell
6. Suzanne Curphey
7. Jenny MacKenzie (Principal St Mary's Putaruru)
8. Bernadette Hall (Principal Bishop Edward Gaines Tokoroa)
9. Cheryl-Lee Henare

Proprietor's Reps

1. Paul Dykstra
- 2.
- 3.

Staff Rep: Nicola Bailey (St Mary's Putaruru)

Parish Priest: Father Robert Sharplin

Review Team

Lead Reviewer: Terry Consedine

Accompanying Reviewer: Dianne Porter

The Aims of Catholic Special Character External Evaluation for Development

The Catholic special character evaluation process produces a focused picture of the impact of Catholic schooling and the effectiveness of its goals on the lives of all tamariki. The process seeks to determine whether they have encountered the living God revealed in Jesus Christ, grown in knowledge of Him and His Church, and as a result are forming a deep and lasting relationship with Jesus Christ and the Church¹. The process also evaluates how the whole school community engages in authentic Catholic Christian witness and evangelisation.

The evaluation also investigates how the school is acting as a kaitiaki of Catholic special character including meeting its statutory compliances.

A collaborative external evaluation process between the school and the evaluators helps the school see what it is doing well and identify its next steps.

¹ Ibid.

Introduction

Bishop Edward Gaines Catholic School is a full primary catering for Year 1 to Year 8 operating as a Catholic Integrated School, located in the predominantly timber industry town of Tokoroa. It is the only Catholic school in the township. It maintains an attractive campus situated between St Pius X Church and Papa o te Aroha Marae. The school maintains a close relationship with St. Pius X Parish.

Tokoroa takes its name from the chief of the first tribe iwi in the area Ngati Kapu Pungapunga. During the 1970s the population reached 20,000 with the huge forestry industry. The population is currently less than 14,000. It is expected that there will be growth in the area with the opening of a polytech and a dairy factory in 2024. The school roll is culturally diverse and is slowly increasing. The majority of ethnic groups represented within the school are Māori, and NZ European/Pākehā. Other ethnicities include the Cook Islands, Samoa, Zimbabwe, Korea and Thailand.

The Ruakawa iwi has a strong presence in the area. The school continues to develop connections with the iwi and with Papa o te Aroha Marae. The marae was established by the Tokoroa Māori Society in 1987. It was created as a community marae to be used by all peoples to demonstrate the value of aroha (care and attention), respect and charity to all.

The school currently comprises a modern learning environment with flexible learning spaces and kitchen facilities as well as a prefab block that contains the toilet facilities, school library and a multi-purpose classroom space with designated areas for: art, music, indoor games and science. The tamariki make good use of the astroturf court area, the large playing field, a junior playground and a new senior playground. Fully covered sunshades provide sun shade in the hot months. A bike track and a garden environmental area are both currently in their development stages.

There have been significant developments in promoting the school as Tokoroa's only Catholic school with new and vibrant signage displayed around the school grounds and in particular, on the boundary area facing the very busy state highway. A reflection area dedicated to Mary and designed by a past student has been added. Catholic heritage is well represented in classroom wall displays as well.

Bernadette Hall is a first-time tumuaki, appointed in 2022. She brings a wealth of knowledge as a result of her previous experience as a Director of Religious Education. She draws on her strong faith and knowledge of the Catholic education curriculum to lead her staff, tamariki and school community with enthusiasm and sincere passion in her leadership of the school. The school values are around the foundations of growing tamariki in faith, pride, leadership and engagement.

Progress with Recommendations from the 2 - 3 April 2019 Catholic Special Character Review for Development Report

Key Recommendations:

- 1. That the school finds ways to creatively develop prayer and spirituality opportunities for the Staff. TCI papers and prayer opportunities can be discussed together, and be chosen to be completed together.**

The entire school staff have participated in a staff RE retreat at Tyburn Monastery this term. Kaiako gather for prayers as a staff on Tuesday mornings before school begins. The tumuaki has led meditation for teachers in classrooms and at the retreat to demonstrate how to facilitate meditation and unpack its benefits. TCI papers have been offered in 2022 and 2023. Our first time teachers have had the opportunity to complete the course for Teachers New to Catholic Schools. This year one kaiako and the tumuaki are both undergoing TCI papers RE602 Religious Education Today & RE501 What Catholics Believe.

A planned teacher-only day in June will focus on how to set up a prayer table for specific and liturgical themes. Prayer resources and slideshow prayers created by the principal are shared with the staff for use in class but also as examples of how to lead prayers. The principal is also proactively seeking avenues to access local resource people to assist in the delivery of Religious Education in the classrooms. The school has the support of local expertise starting in Term two, 2023, to work alongside teachers to help guide them in Te Reo in Karakia. Parishioner James Coxhead supports the school at school-led parish Masses.

- 2. In order to develop the Charism of Mary Mackillop in the hearts and lives of the community, there is an opportunity to attend the Colloquium offered by the Sisters of St Joseph in Mission Bay, Auckland.**

The school is hoping that kaiako will attend this in 2024. Tumuaki has attended previously. The staff are working on making the Charism of Mary Mackillop more prominent in the school. This has meant a shift in focus in planning and celebrations and to the local curriculum delivery.

- 3. In order to support a strong self review process, the Evaluation Team recommends that an appropriate filing system that collects evidence under the Dimensions be designed to suit the needs of the school. This is an extension of the current Self Review Document, developing categories and including evidence.**

The Professional Growth Cycle includes a Religious Education component each year.

Dimension 1: Te Tūtaki ki a Te Karaiti-Encounter with Christ

How effectively does the school encourage and facilitate the development of a personal relationship with Jesus Christ who reveals the transforming love and truth of the living God?

At Bishop Edward Gaines Catholic School Tokoroa, the Catholic special character of the school is very evident and visible through the high energy leadership and passion of the tumuaki who works supportively alongside her two teaching staff.

The Catholic vision of the school is clearly evident in all documentation. Opportunities are available for the spiritual development and formation of both the kaiako and the tamariki. In recent times, further measures have been introduced to increase the opportunities for facilitating the development of a personal relationship with Jesus Christ. Key among these has been the gathering of the kaiako for a rich retreat opportunity at the Tyburn Monastery Rotorua. A presentation from the Mother Superior at Tyburn helped the kaiako to see prayer through another lens.

The previous parish priest Father Fernando and resident priest of Tyburn, Father Carl, have on different occasions, talked to tamariki and kaiako about the importance of prayer. They offered suggestions on ways to ensure that varied and rich prayer becomes an integral part of the daily routine of school and daily life.

Kaiako gather regularly for prayer on Tuesday mornings before school. This was initially led by the tumuaki and now kaiako share the role of leading this prayer time. The tumuaki has worked hard to model meditation for teachers in an effort to re-establish the practice in the school. Meditation is now part of the school culture and kaiako are confident in leading meditation after lunch.

One impact of increased school prayer practice is that parents say their tamariki talk about what they do at school and how they pray.

“They teach us about what Jesus did for us and we pray, we do meditation to open our hearts to Jesus.”(tamariki)

There is a regular programme of prayer liturgies and Masses. These are planned appropriately for the age and culture of participants. Tamariki have the chance to develop these liturgies and to have some leadership roles in them. The whole school takes the opportunity to develop their relationship with Jesus further through celebration of the Eucharist with the parish at Mass each Friday. The impact of this is that tamariki are more engaged and have a much greater understanding of the Mass and liturgy.

The new parish priest Fr Robert Sharplin and tumuaki work together to increase opportunities for families to be more actively involved in the Sunday Mass. Together they would like to implement a wider range of music choices and singing as a means of promoting this worship. There is a good connection between the parish and the school community. Most recently there was a very good attendance from whānau for the parish Pentecost Mass where Prayers of the

Faithful were read in English, Te Reo and Samoan. Parish members are invited to the school to hear tamariki read to them. Senior tamariki hosts a morning tea. This serves as a further initiative to strengthen the relationship between the school and the parish.

During the fortnightly assembly the whole school gathers to recite the school prayer and any other relevant prayers based on the time of year and what is happening in the world. Kaiako and tamariki have a roster for leading the assembly. Within the classroom prayer is fostered in a variety of ways. Tamariki are provided opportunities to lead and share any special prayers they have at prayer times.

Leadership among tamariki is highly encouraged. A localized leadership camp with a Catholic special character focus was recently created as a new initiative with the assistance of senior tamariki from John Paul College Rotorua. The plan is to ensure there is opportunity for all to learn life skills with a local history emphasis. Previously, the school camp was combined with St Mary's Putaruru. It is unfortunate that the cost was too expensive for some tamariki and they were unable to attend. There is also the opportunity for the tamariki to attend NET Ministry at John Paul College in Rotorua.

The kaiako are beginning to incorporate tikanga and Te Reo Māori and Māori expression of Katorikatanga into a number of aspects of Catholic special character. Tamariki bless themselves in Te Reo and some prayers are able to be recited in Te Reo. Waiata are sung and included as part of Masses, in the classroom liturgies and also at assemblies.

"When we say our morning prayers, we acknowledge our local iwi for the land we learn on. We also do our due diligence and make efforts to learn local karakia, waiata and stories. Celebrating cultural events, acknowledges them as Māori learners." (kaiako)

With the support of a local community member, Matua Whare began in Term Two 2023 to work alongside kaiako to help guide the school in Te Reo in karakia. James Coxhead, a Board member is also supporting the school in kapa haka as well as at parish school Masses.

The kaiako are very inclusive of all learners and make a point of including the particular needs of Māori and Pasifika tamariki in their planning and delivery of curriculum. There is a genuine effort to show full respect for cultures by ensuring they pronounce tamariki names correctly. Prayer is shared in particular in Te Reo but also there are attempts made to reflect the other cultures as well. In order to further embed these initiatives as part of school culture, the tumuaki has approached MAC (Māori Achievement Collaborative), Kahui Ako Māori lead teachers, some local Tokoroa schools, MOE PLD providers. This is an ongoing programme to continue to build kaiako confidence in this area.

The school provides a variety of opportunities for members of its community, especially the kaiako to develop and deepen their knowledge and understanding of the Scriptures and

teachings of the Catholic Church. Both current full time kaiako are positive role models. They support, uphold and witness the Catholic special character of the school. They have both taken opportunities to learn more about the Catholic approach by studying papers through Te Kupenga.

The school supports and promotes parish programmes for the Sacraments of Initiation, as well as programmes that support the faith of tamariki. The tumuaki actively connects with families who are eligible to receive the Sacraments through social media, text, phone calls, newsletters, paper invitations, and face to face encouragement. She offers support to whānau in a variety of ways. Discussions are held, explanations given and sponsorship offered. Transport is also provided if required. The school itself is an excellent venue to deliver the programme.

In 2023 there were two school Masses that included Baptisms with a total of eight tamariki being Baptised. The tumuaki runs the meetings in preparation for Baptism The Sacramental preparation for Reconciliation, Holy Eucharist and Confirmation is carried by Sister Maree from Rotorua. In 2023 there are five tamariki currently preparing for these Sacraments. Last year there was approximately the same number.

The tumuaki articulates and promotes a faith-based vision for the school. She confidently and competently articulates her own faith and is exemplary in her commitment to her own ongoing faith formation. In her short time as tumuaki she has been actively involved in the strategic and annual planning development of Catholic special character. There has been some work done on internal evaluation. There is a plan now in place to follow the National Catholic Education model. This will involve looking at an aspect of a Dimension each year and considering the impact of the Catholic character initiatives.

Next Steps for Development

- To continue to build a range of opportunities for kaiako, tamariki and their whānau to further encounter Christ including
 - (1) the promotion of the Sacraments among tamariki and extending the kaiako, tamariki and whānau understanding of the Josephite Charism.
 - (2) with the support of the parish priest, explore possibilities to implement a wider range of music choices and singing at school led parish Masses.

Dimension 2: Mā te Mātauranga ka Tipu: Growth in Knowledge

How effectively does the school assist its community to grow in the knowledge and understanding of Jesus Christ, his teachings, and the Catholic Church?

The tumuaki is a faith-filled, positive role model. She is extremely well qualified with a Masters Degree in Educational Leadership (Hons) and a Certificate in Religious Education as well as a Business Diploma. She continues to do papers alongside other kaiako.

Bernie is an authentic role model for lifelong learning. Her two accompanying kaiako are relatively new to the school and new to teaching in a Catholic school. They are keen and are currently undertaking the necessary courses on offer to improve their understanding and qualifications in Religious Education such as through Te Kupenga, The Catholic Institute's *'Teachers New to Catholic Schools'* course. One kaiako commented on the supportive nature of the tumuaki who has helped her unpack assignments and tasks with her. They are also keen to learn more about the new curriculum *To Tātou Whakapono Our Faith*. She attended the day in Rotorua in 2022 on the new curriculum document. Kaiako engages in a regular programme of Catholic special character professional learning and formation. Updated records of professional development in Religious Education are kept and monitored. Gaps in areas of Professional Learning are identified and these objectives are included in the annual plan and in the revised local curriculum document.

The Religious education programme is given high priority. The kaiako are on a journey under the guidance of the tumuaki to provide effective learning in Religious Education and are actively taking steps to prepare for the new Curriculum. The programme is well resourced. Kaiako are to be commended for taking every opportunity to gain the necessary knowledge and to become qualified in this area.

There is in-depth planning in Religious Education which is led and guided by the tumuaki. The teacher-only day, staff meetings, professional learning groups, and local curriculum focus have all enabled a special focus on all aspects of Religious Education. This is a central part of the school's local curriculum which has been developed in partnership with *'Momentum Learning'*. Its focus is the Catholic traditions and local iwi and its history.

Assessment and reporting to parents is in line with other curriculum areas. In the reports there is specific reporting on tamariki learning of Religious Education. There is an emphasis on acknowledging that whānau are the first educators of their tamariki. The school actively works to build whānau participation in the faith development of their tamariki. Links and readings to more information are added to the school newsletter to help increase parental understanding of a Holy day or theme that is a focus. Religious Education workbooks are sent home to allow whānau to see what is being taught. Social media is used as another means of communication with whānau. The website has been recently updated. Facebook is used as a means of sharing celebrations of tamariki.

Recently whānau were consulted to gauge what they knew about Religious Education in the school. As a result of those who responded, the most important aspects identified were - an

understanding of the Sacraments and getting to know God, as well as living a good, Christian life.

Some consultation with Māori whānau has taken place already (2022). This has taken the form of whanau hui where the Māori community were invited to come and talk about their desires and vision for the school. An impact of this has been that there is now work being done so that the educational experiences of ākonga Māori in the Religious Education classroom reflect their identity, language, and culture.

Kaiako are inclusive of all learners including Māori and Pasifika tamariki in their planning as well as keeping track of their learning progressions. Good practice includes interacting in small group learning activities for Māori and Pasifika learners getting to know their particular needs. Efforts are made with language that reflects these cultures. Emphasis is given to learn to pronounce words and names correctly and is seen as important. Te Reo is used in learning activities, wall displays and student workbooks.

The school develops tamariki' awareness of their responsibilities as global citizens as well as citizens of Aotearoa, New Zealand. The core principles of Catholic social teaching are given prominence especially through the Caritas focus during Lent each year and during Social Justice week. The emphasis is in promoting care of the environment, care for others less fortunate, relief for those suffering or without. The practical side of this is exemplified by fundraising for disaster relief, raising awareness of being a caretaker of the environment and their knowledge of kaitiakitanga, as well as being involved as a small school, in community initiatives that promote social justice. There is a desire to look for further opportunities for service in the local community.

All aspects of the Health Curriculum, including human sexuality and personal relationships are taught from a Catholic perspective at all levels. This underpins everything and is the basis of the framework for the sexuality programme in schools. The health programme includes a strong link with the Health and Physical Education Curriculum around relationships and the Catholic lens is added giving emphasis on how *'we are created in God's image and so our bodies are sacred as such need to be cared for and respected.'* There is a plan for other teachers to complete the 'Having Life to the Full' programme in 2024.

Next Steps for Development

- Continue to look for opportunities and support for the kaiako who are new to Catholic schools and the teaching of Religious Education to undergo professional learning and undertake papers where appropriate.

Dimension 3: Te Whakaatu Karaitiana-Christian Witness

How effectively does the school provide a hope-filled Christian witness which empowers its community members to integrate their faith and their life?

The new parish priest now resides in the Presbytery next door to the school. He is regularly invited to take an integral part in the life of the school. He is happy to do this and values the relationship he has with the school. The school and parish work collaboratively to build relationships that are a true example of Christian witness. The tumuaki and parish priest work together to build the connection between school and parish.

“In developing an inclusive spirituality the school and parish are focusing this year on liturgical music with special emphasis but not limited to Te Reo.” (Parish Priest)

The tumuaki takes the opportunity to join in the celebration of Mass in the parish as often as possible. Tamariki are trained to serve on the altar. Newsletters for both the school and the parish are supportive of each other in their promotion of events. Whānau are offered a variety of opportunities to encounter Christ as a community. They are invited to special days of Holy observance in the church e.g Pentecost, Easter, Palm Sunday, Holy Communion and Baptisms. These are seen as ways to provide opportunities for encounters with Christ for kaiako, tamariki and their whānau. The celebration of significant Feast Days in the Church are extensive in their celebration and whānau have been very supportive. The Stations of the Cross were led by tamariki during Holy Week. Recently at Pentecost, all cultures were invited to dress in their national attire and read in their own indigenous language. This was very well supported by whānau. It is through opportunities like these, that the school is working to develop an understanding of the cultural background of every tamariki, honouring their identity, language, knowledge, and values. This is an area that the tumuaki is hoping to strengthen even further.

The school, as an authentic Catholic community, demonstrates a strong commitment to Te Tiriti o Waitangi and its principles of protection, partnership, and participation. By doing this it reflects the commitment of the Aotearoa New Zealand Catholic Church to bi-cultural partnership. The school is working to develop an understanding of te ao Māori. This is especially provided through the normalisation of tikanga protocols in the school. Opportunities are taken to allow for small groups to work together to complete tasks where that is more comfortable for Māori learners.

There is excellent support provided for Kapa haka and the learning of waiata from a Board member. The school prides itself on manaakitanga. Food is provided for guests and visitors. The greeting of visitors is in Te Reo. Singing waiata has become part of school culture and is continuing to strengthen. A tuakana-teina afternoon approach for all levels has been included each Friday, and this is a place to learn basic prayers in Te Reo. Kaitiakitanga is continuing to build. Tamariki make every effort to respect, repair and recycle material wherever possible. ‘*To respect the environment*’, was one of the four new rules co-constructed by tamariki at the start

of 2022. This is an ongoing area of development with the plan to have gardens as part of care for the environment. (Laudato Si)

At present, the school has eight significant people who are great models. There is no plan to change these as significant influences in the school. However, particular emphasis is being put into strengthening the Josephite Charism of the school. This knowledge is being built within the tamariki, kaiako and whānau. The school's chosen charism is based on the Josephite Sisters. The intention is to make Mary Mackillop more actively promoted as a lens through which the school's Catholic identity and commitment to Jesus Christ are made visible. Currently the tamariki can articulate who she was and the work she did. The impact of work being done in this area is that there is a welcoming environment at the school where all are treated with hospitality, aroha and respect. Warm relationships are evident at all levels. There is friendly communication, and a sense that all are treated with respect. One tamaiti summed it up this way.

"I always try to be kind. I try to be patient with others. Sometimes I dont like everybody but I try to still be kind to them." (tamaiti)

The local pre-school community are invited for school visits called 'teddy bear picnics'. During these visits the tumuaki unpacks the point of difference with a Catholic school. Alongside this parents are invited for visits to the church where aspects of the church and Mass are explained.

The school supports and cooperates with other Catholic schools especially Putaruru with whom they, at present, share a Board. They also participate in sports days with the other Catholic schools. The challenge remains to provide a pathway to the Catholic secondary schools as the buses do not pass through Tokoroa.

The small size of the school ensures that tamariki are personally known, cared for by the kaiako, and provided with support as required. As a result of being a PB4L School, the tumuaki has included the 'Zones of Regulation' to help tamariki monitor their behaviour. This has helped them identify their feelings and learn strategies to deal with them. The impact of this initiative is that tamariki are developing the skills to take responsibility for their own behaviour. In recent times, the school set up a new system for keeping records of tamariki behaviour. Kaiako are now more aware of the triggers and situations that may upset or disengage tamariki. Re-engagement strategies have been developed and a special 'Chill Zone' in the principal's office has been created for tamariki who may need a little time out to re-engage with the class. Tamariki spoken to by the evaluators told us how they valued this opportunity when it was required.

As people of the Gospel and in the light of the preferential option for the poor, kaiako and tamariki treat each person with respect and aroha and reach out to those most in need. There is a system of Tuakana-teina operating among the tamariki to support this. The school welcomes tamariki with a diversity of ability and learning needs and provides appropriate assistance and

programmes to enable them to fulfill their potential. Some examples include: Individual Education Plans for tamariki with particular learning needs. The tumuaki applies to the Ministry for in Class Support. External support services such as RTLB, RTLit and SWiSS are also engaged when needed for tamariki identified as needing extra help. The tumuaki supports these initiatives through her own teaching of remedial groups for reading and writing.

Kaiako and support staff are affirmed and appreciated, and their wellbeing is supported. They openly state that they value the support of the tumuaki. *'Teacher Appreciation Week'* is taken as an opportunity to celebrate the gifts that each staff member brings. Staff birthdays are acknowledged and any other special achievements as well. Retreats have been a means of connecting with one another as well as spiritual input. The tumuaki releases teachers where possible and regularly covers all morning tea and lunch duties in order to allow support staff and kaiako to gather together for breaks without interruptions. The fact that all kaiako live outside of Tokoroa, staff meetings are timetabled with consideration of traveling time to and from the kura and for personal/family commitments. A social netball team has been organised for all staff to participate in the local competition if they so wish.

The school has a Christ-centred culture of justice, service, and outreach in local, national, and international communities. This is particularly recognised through the Caritas activities in Lent and a school focus in Social Justice week. Service and outreach opportunities based on the Gospel message are an important focus of the school. The school is working to provide more opportunities for tamariki and kaiako to actively contribute to the life of the local community. Already tamariki have had some local presence in the community through participating in the Tokoroa ANZAC ceremonies, utilising local sports facilities-aquatics centre, as well as the tennis courts, gymnastics area. They have also participated in the local schools Pink Walk Day. They have attended an EPRO 8 event, Sports Cultural Exchange as well as teacher-only days with the Kahui Ako. There is a plan to re-establish some opportunities which were halted in Covid times.

Next Steps for Development

- Continue to grow programmes like Caritas for service opportunities for tamariki for social justice in the world and in particular work with social justice initiatives in Tokoroa.
- For tamariki to have greater opportunity to be in the presence of significant role models and the priests, sisters and faith-filled lay people to see how these people live their lives for Christ.

Dimension 4: Te Kaitiakitanga me te Whakapakari I te Tuakiri Katorika-Safeguarding and Strengthening Catholic Special Character

How effectively does the school, in its stewardship, and its compliance with legal obligations, safeguard and strengthen its Catholic identity?

The School Board and tumuaki ensure that the vision and strategic direction for the school clearly openly reflect the school's Catholic character. There is a plan for the new Board to look at the range of school Values that are presented to decide which direction they want the school to take. At present the Board of Trustees is combined with St Mary's Putaruru. There is a plan to have their own separate Board later in 2023.

With a new Board to be formed later in the year, this could be a time to review which significant people will be the main focus and which 'Values' are a priority to compliment the Josephite Charism of the school. At present there seems to be a number of these as House names (Aubert, Mariu, Douglas and Bishop Edward Gaines) and including the acronyms BEGS (Believe Enrich Glorify Serve), and BISHOP (Belief, Integrity, Service, Honesty, Openness and Participation).

At the time of the evaluation, the school had submitted the attestation document covering off the compliance requirements, as well as the 2023 Proprietor's Appointee report.

Based on the current staffing of the school at 5.9 Full Time Teacher Equivalent, the school is required to have two tagged kaiako under Schedule 6, Clause 47 of the Education and Training Act 2020. At present, the tumuaki is the only special character position. The tumuaki is also the Director of Religious Studies. The Board is aware of the need to find another tagged teacher and plan to do what they can to put this right. It is recognised that there is real difficulty attracting Catholic teachers to Tokoroa.

In reviewing the letters of appointment for permanent teaching kaiako, it was seen that responsibilities of teaching in a Catholic school are clearly set down.

The Professional Growth Cycle for teaching kaiako is a work in progress, partly due to the recent changes in staff. The Catholic elaborations are clearly part of the planned process. The Board of Trustees should include a Catholic special character dimension in the tumuaki appraisal also.

Board policy and plans support the expectation of the NZCBC that the tumuaki and kaiako of Religious Education are working towards a formal qualification in Religious Education or Catholic Special Character and that all kaiako are working towards the next level of certification. There is very good support provided to the present kaiako for faith formation and increasing knowledge in preparation for the teaching of the Religious Education Curriculum To Tātou Whakapono. Both have been given the opportunity to do papers from Te Kupenga and are both very willing to do so.

The school has one tamariki over the compliant level with regards to preference and non-preference pupils. There is a need for this to be returned to the compliant position as tamariki leave.

At the time of the evaluation the school had 44 pupils. Records were shown to be kept of the enrolment status of tamariki as to what preference criteria they are enrolled under or whether they are non-preference. If tamariki are baptised or received into the church while attending Bishop Edward Gaines Catholic school, the records on the student management system are updated. Of the 44 tamariki in the school at the time of this visit, 77% are enrolled under the 5.1 preference criteria.

The annual budget reflects the commitment to special character with money allocated for Religious Education development. Religious Education resources are purchased from the curriculum resourcing budget.

The tumuaki reports to the School Board at each meeting on matters relating to special character. All school promotional material reflects the Catholic identity of the school including the content of the school's Facebook social media page. 'Skool loop' and 'Educa' are used as means of informing parents of school events and what is happening in Religious Education teaching. There has been some very good work done to update the website to give comprehensive information to the community.

All Board of Trustees policies are dated and reviewed as part of the Board's three year review cycle. The school uses 'School Docs' for hosting its policies. Although there is a general Catholic character statement in some policies it is important that in the review of some of these policies, that they are viewed through a Catholic lens. The Board incorporates an understanding of Te Tiriti o Waitangi, te ao, tikanga and mātauranga Māori into their policies and school procedures. Board documentation sets clear expectations for appropriate cultural responsiveness across the school.

Self-review is an area that could be developed further to evaluate initiatives and look at their impact on tamariki, kaiako and whānau. It would be great to see this process used each year to evaluate an aspect of one of the Dimensions.

Board policy and the tumuaki ensure that those aspects of the Health Curriculum which involve human sexuality education are set within the context of the teaching of the Catholic Church. At present it is the responsibility of the tumuaki to teach this area. Life Education Trust has also been used to assist in this area. Their main focus was to concentrate on learning around healthy relationships and making good choices. There is a plan for the kaiako to complete the 'Having Life to the Full' course in 2024.

Discussion was held with Board members and the parish priest over the low number of Proprietors Appointees. It is envisaged that this will be resolved with the new Board.

Next Steps for Development

- Recognising the challenge of finding Catholic teachers in small towns, the Board and management need to keep promoting and developing creative ways to attract Catholic teachers to ensure there are sufficient Catholic character (tagged) positions in the school.

- To review which significant people as House names, the acronyms BEGS, and which 'BISHOP Values' will be the main focus or priority to compliment the Josephite Charism of the school.

Recommendations

- The tumuaki and Board as well as the current parish priest are keen to work cooperatively to search for ways to encourage more whānau to join them in the celebration of the Eucharist in the parish on Sunday.
- Introduce an annual school evaluation process of the Catholic special character initiatives in the school in the light of the Four Dimensions. This is with a view to enhance present initiatives asking: why are we doing this and what is the impact on individual tamariki, kaiako and whānau.
- Continue to build kaiako knowledge and confidence in effective implementation of the new Religious Education Curriculum Tō Tātou Whakapono, under the guidance of the tumuaki. This includes having a deliberate professional development plan for each teacher to become fully equipped to teach Religious Education.

The evaluation team is confident that the tumuaki has the willingness and ability to address these recommendations fully before the next external evaluation. The Catholic Education Office staff are available to assist the tumuaki, the new Board and kaiako in compiling an action plan to address these recommendations.

The evaluation team thanks the community of Bishop Edward Gaines Catholic School for the welcome, hospitality and cooperation extended to them and for the opportunity to experience the way that they safeguard and strengthen their Catholic special character. The organisation and preparation for the external evaluation by the school was very extensive and is greatly appreciated.

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